



Recognizing Depression

Throughout our lives there may be many times when we feel unhappy, stressed, anxious – even pessimistic. Like most emotions, these feelings are often normal reactions to a life situation. But when a feeling of sadness, emptiness, irritability or loss of enjoyment becomes intense and persistent, it may be an indication of clinical depression.

Clinical depression is a disorder that requires the intervention of a behavioral health professional. If not treated, clinical depression can persist or get worse, causing anguish to the depression sufferer and to his or her loved ones.

Here are some of the symptoms of depression:

- Persistent unhappiness, anxiety, indifference or emptiness
- Loss of pleasure from things that were once enjoyable
- Feelings of low self-esteem, powerlessness or guilt
- Feelings of desperation
- Sleep disorders such as oversleeping, difficulty sleeping, or falling asleep and then waking up and being unable to get back to sleep
- A lack of energy or motivation
- Changes in appetite or weight
- Thoughts of hurting or killing yourself, or attempts to do so
- Ongoing nervousness or irritability
- Difficulty with memory, concentration, or decision-making
- Aches, pains or other physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment
- Sexual dysfunction

If you or someone you know exhibits 5 or more of these for more than 2 consecutive weeks, then you – or she or he – should seek professional help immediately. Additionally, if the first two items are present, then depression is suspect and an evaluation would be useful.

Remember: clinical depression is a diagnosable medical condition, not a personality problem or character flaw. Many people avoid seeking help for depression because they mistakenly believe that suffering from depression – or admitting to its symptoms – is a sign of weakness or failure. Nothing could be further from the truth, and by persisting in this attitude, depression sufferers only cause further harm to themselves and those around them.

Your EAP can also provide you with help accessing available resources and referrals to help you identify and manage depression.

For more information, please visit eap4soc.mhn.com,
or call us at (866) EAP-4SOC.
Your EAP is there for you 24 hours a day, seven days a week.